

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:

receiving broadcast communications including content descriptors via a first communications link from a broadcast source, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of corresponding content pieces;

performing a rating algorithm to rate at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces to generate a rating feedback; and

transmitting the rating feedback via a second communications link to a remote location.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the first communications link and the second communication link comprise a common transmission platform.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise separate transmission platforms.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating feedback comprises a plurality of rated content pieces, and wherein transmitting the rating feedback comprises periodically transmitting a batch of the rating feedback to the remote location, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating feedback comprises a single rated content piece, and wherein transmitting the rating feedback comprises transmitting the rating feedback to the remote location in real-time.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the second communications link comprises a continuous connection to the remote location, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the second communications link comprises a connection to the remote location that is initiated to transmit the rating feedback, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the broadcast communications include a schedule for the content descriptors that is received prior to receiving the content descriptors, the schedule providing information pertaining to when the content descriptors may be received.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the content descriptors comprise a continuous stream of data that may be tapped into at any time to rate at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces via the rating algorithm.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving broadcast communications including the plurality of content pieces; and
performing a capture algorithm to selectively determine which, if any, of the content pieces should be cached, and

wherein the rating algorithm is identical to the capture algorithm.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of any existing cached data files to generate the rating feedback.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a revenue-generating potential of at least a portion of the content pieces, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's revenue generating potential when generating the rating feedback.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a user's previous viewing habits to generate the rating feedback.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's size to generate the rating feedback.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a user's preferences to generate the rating feedback.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of an availability window corresponding to a content piece to generate the rating feedback.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a future broadcast schedule to generate the rating feedback.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's past revenue performance to generate the rating feedback.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a review of a content piece provided by an external source to generate the rating feedback.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's duration to generate the rating feedback.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a user's age to generate the rating feedback.

22. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

generating a display on a display device that provides a user-interface that enables a user to rate content pieces so as to indicate a level of desirability for those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the user rates at least a portion of the content pieces.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm automatically rates at least a portion of the content pieces.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the rating algorithm automatically rates at least a portion of the content pieces that were not rated by the user.

26. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a user's previous viewing habits to generate the rating feedback.

27. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's size to generate the rating feedback.

28. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a user's preferences to generate the rating feedback.

29. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of an availability window corresponding to a content piece to generate the rating feedback.

30. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a future broadcast schedule to generate the rating feedback.

31. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's past revenue performance to generate the rating feedback.

32. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a review of a content piece provided by an external source to generate the rating feedback.

33. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's duration to generate the rating feedback.

34. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a user's age to generate the rating feedback.

35. The method of claim 22, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of any existing cached data files to generate the rating feedback.

36. An apparatus, comprising:
a processor;
a memory, coupled to the processor, to store a plurality of machine instructions including a rating algorithm;
a storage device, coupled to the processor, to store content pieces; and
a communications interface, coupled to the processor, which enables the apparatus to receive broadcast communications from a broadcast source via a first communications link, and to send rating feedback to the broadcast source via a second communications link, the broadcast communications including a plurality of content descriptors that describe a plurality of corresponding content pieces; and

wherein execution of the machine instructions by the processor causes the apparatus to receive the content descriptors as they are broadcast, to perform the rating algorithm to generate the rating feedback, the rating feedback corresponding to at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces, and to transmit the rating feedback to the broadcast source.

37. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein transmitting the rating feedback to the broadcast source comprises periodically transmitting the rating feedback as a batch of rated content pieces via the communications interface.

38. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the rating feedback comprises a single rated content piece, and wherein transmitting the rating feedback to the broadcast source comprises transmitting the rating feedback in real-time.

39. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise a common transmission platform.

40. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise separate transmission platforms.

41. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the communications interface maintains a continuous connection to a remote location to transmit the rating feedback, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

42. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the communications interface initiates a connection to a remote location via a communications link to transmit the rating feedback, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

43. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the broadcast communications include a schedule for the content descriptors that is broadcast prior to sending the content descriptors, and is received via the communications interface, and wherein execution of the plurality of machine instructions further causes the apparatus to prepare for receiving the broadcast of the content descriptors based on the schedule to enable the apparatus to receive the content descriptors when they are broadcast.

44. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the content descriptors comprise a continuous stream of data that may be tapped into at any time by the communications interface to enable the processor to perform the rating algorithm to rate at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

45. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the plurality of machine instructions further include a capture algorithm, which, when executed by the processor, causes the apparatus to selectively determine which, if any, of the content pieces should be stored in the storage device, and wherein the rating algorithm is identical to the capture algorithm.

46. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein at least one content piece is cached in the storage device, and the rating algorithm considers the at least one content piece that is cached when generating the rating feedback.

47. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a revenue-generating potential of at least a portion of the content pieces, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's revenue generating potential when generating the rating feedback.

48. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the memory stores data pertaining to a user's previous viewing habits, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the user's previous viewing habits to generate the rating feedback.

49. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a content piece's size, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's size to generate the rating feedback.

50. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the memory stores data pertaining to a user's preferences, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the user's preferences to generate the rating feedback.

51. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to an availability window corresponding to a content piece, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the availability window to generate the rating feedback.

52. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a future broadcast schedule, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the future broadcast schedule to generate the rating feedback.

53. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a content piece's past revenue performance, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's past revenue performance to generate the rating feedback.

54. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a review of a content piece provided by an external source, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the review to generate the rating feedback.

55. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a content piece's duration, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's duration to generate the rating feedback.

56. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the memory stores data pertaining to a user's age, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the user's age to generate the rating feedback.

57. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the apparatus further includes a video subsystem having an output that generates a display on a display device when the display device

is connected to the output, and wherein execution of the plurality of machine instructions by the processor causes the apparatus to provide a user-interface that enables a user to rate content pieces to indicate a level of desirability for receiving those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

58. The apparatus of claim 57, wherein the user rates at least a portion of the content pieces.

59. The apparatus of claim 57, wherein the rating algorithm automatically rates at least a portion of the content pieces.

60. The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the rating algorithm automatically rates at least a portion of the content pieces that were not rated by the user.

61. An article of manufacture, comprising:

a machine-readable medium that provides instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to:

receive broadcast communications including content descriptors via a first communications link from a broadcast source, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of corresponding content pieces;

perform a rating algorithm to rate at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces to generate a rating feedback; and

transmit the rating feedback via a second communications link to a remote location.

62. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the first communications link and the second communication link comprise a single transmission platform.

63. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise separate transmission platforms.

64. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating feedback comprises a list of rated content pieces, and wherein transmitting the rating feedback comprises periodically transmitting a batch of the rating feedback to the remote location, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

65. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating feedback comprises a single rated content piece, and wherein transmitting the rating feedback comprises transmitting the rating feedback to the remote location in real-time.

66. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the second communications link comprises a continuous connection to the remote location, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

67. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the second communications link comprises a connection to the remote location that is initiated to transmit the rating feedback, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

68. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of any existing cached data files to generate the rating feedback.

69. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a revenue-generating potential of at least a portion of the content pieces, and the rating algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's revenue generating potential when generating the rating feedback.

70. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a user's previous viewing habits to generate the rating feedback.

71. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's size to generate the rating feedback.

72. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a user's preferences to generate the rating feedback.

73. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of an availability window corresponding to a content piece to generate the rating feedback.

74. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a future broadcast schedule to generate the rating feedback.

75. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's past revenue performance to generate the rating feedback.

76. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a review of a content piece provided by an external source to generate the rating feedback.

77. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's duration to generate the rating feedback.

78. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein the rating algorithm includes a consideration of a user's age to generate the rating feedback.

79. The article of manufacture of claim 61, wherein execution of the instructions by the machine, further cause the machine to generate a display on a display device to provide a user-interface that enables a user to rate content pieces to indicate a level of desirability for receiving those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

80. The article of manufacture of claim 79, wherein the user rates at least a portion of the content pieces.

81. The article of manufacture of claim 79, wherein the rating algorithm automatically rates at least a portion of the content pieces.

82. The article of manufacture of claim 80, wherein the rating algorithm automatically rates at least a portion of the content pieces that were not rated by the user.

83. A method, comprising:

broadcasting broadcast communications including content descriptors from a broadcast source to a plurality of client systems via a first communications link, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of content pieces;

receiving a rating feedback from the plurality of client systems via a second communications link, wherein the rating feedback comprises a rating of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

84. The method of claim 83, wherein the rating feedback comprises a plurality of rated content pieces, and wherein receiving the rating feedback comprises periodically receiving the rating feedback as a batch of rated content pieces from each the plurality of client systems.

85. The method of claim 83, wherein the rating feedback comprises a single rated content piece, and wherein receiving the rating feedback comprises receiving the rating feedback in real-time.

86. The method of claim 83, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise a common transmission platform.

87. The method of claim 83, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise separate transmission platforms.

88. The method of claim 83, wherein the second communications link comprises a continuous connection from each of the plurality of client systems for receiving the rating feedback.

89. The method of claim 83, wherein the second communications link comprises a connection initiated by each of the plurality of client systems.

90. The method of claim 83, wherein the content descriptors comprise a continuous stream of data that may be tapped into at any time to rate at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

91. The method of claim 83, wherein the rating of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces is generated via a rating algorithm.

92. The method of claim 83, wherein the rating feedback includes user rating of content pieces to indicate a level of desirability in receiving those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

93. The method of claim 83, wherein the rating feedback is received from each of the plurality of client systems independently.

94. A broadcast system, comprising:

a server; and

at least one communications link to transmit broadcast communications including content descriptors to a plurality of client systems, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of corresponding content pieces, and to transmit a rating feedback from each of the

plurality of client systems to the server, wherein the rating feedback comprises a rating of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

95. The broadcast system of claim 94, wherein the rating feedback is transmitted periodically as a batch of rated content pieces via the at least one communications link from each of the plurality of client systems to the server.

96. The broadcast system of claim 94, wherein the rating feedback comprises a single rated content piece, and wherein the rating feedback is transmitted via the at least one communications link from at least one of the plurality of client systems to the server.

97. The broadcast system of claim 94, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a continuous connection to transmit rating feedback from the plurality of client systems to the server.

98. The broadcast system of claim 94, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a connection from each of the plurality of client systems to the server that is initiated to transmit the rating feedback.

99. The broadcast system of claim 94, wherein the content descriptors comprise a continuous stream of data that may be tapped into at any time to rate at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

100. The broadcast system of claim 94, wherein the rating of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces is generated via a rating algorithm.

101. The broadcast system of claim 94, wherein the rating feedback includes user rating of content pieces to indicate a level of desirability to receive those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

102. The broadcast system of claim 94, wherein the rating feedback is transmitted independently from each of the plurality of client systems to the server.

103. An article of manufacture, comprising:

a machine-readable medium that provides instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to:

broadcast broadcast communications including content descriptors from a broadcast source to a plurality of client systems via a first communications link, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of content pieces; and

receive a rating feedback from the plurality of client systems via a second communications link, wherein the rating feedback comprises a rating of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

104. The article of manufacture of claim 103, wherein the rating feedback comprises a plurality of rated content pieces, and wherein receiving the rating feedback comprises periodically receiving the rating feedback as a batch of rated content pieces from each of the plurality of client systems.

105. The article of manufacture of claim 103, wherein the rating feedback comprises a single rated content piece, and wherein receiving the rating feedback comprises receiving the rating feedback in real-time.

106. The article of manufacture of claim 103, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise a common transmission platform.

107. The article of manufacture of claim 103, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise separate transmission platforms.

108. The article of manufacture of claim 103, wherein the second communications link comprises a continuous connection from each of the plurality of client systems for receiving the rating feedback.

109. The article of manufacture of claim 103, wherein the second communications link comprises a connection initiated by each of the plurality of client systems.

110. The article of manufacture of claim 103, wherein the rating of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces is generated via a rating algorithm.

111. The article of manufacture of claim 103, wherein the rating feedback includes user rating of content pieces to indicate a level of desirability to receive those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

112. A system, comprising:

a server;

at least one communications link; and

a client system, the client system including a processor and a memory to store a rating algorithm; and wherein

a plurality of content descriptors are transmitted via the at least one communications link to the client system, the plurality of content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of content pieces;

the processor implements the rating algorithm to rate at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces to generate a rating feedback; and

the rating feedback is transmitted via the at least one communications link to the server.

113. The system of claim 112, wherein the rating feedback is transmitted periodically via the at least one communications link to the server as a batch of rated content pieces.

114. The system of claim 112, wherein the rating feedback comprises a single rated content piece, and wherein the rating feedback is transmitted via the at least one communications link to the server in real-time.

115. The system of claim 112, wherein the rating feedback includes user rating of the content pieces.

116. The system of claim 112, wherein the rating feedback includes automated rating of the content pieces.

117. The system of claim 112, wherein the rating feedback includes user rating of the content pieces and automated rating of the content pieces.

118. The system of claim 112, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a continuous connection to transmit the rating feedback to the server.

119. The system of claim 112, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a connection initiated by the client system to transmit the rating feedback to the server.

120. A method, comprising:

broadcasting content descriptors from a server to at least one client system via at least one communications link, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of corresponding content pieces;

receiving the content descriptors at the at least one client system;

rating at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces to generate a rating feedback; and

communicating the rating feedback to the server via the at least one communications link.

121. The method of claim 120, further comprising:

processing the rating feedback to generate an aggregate representation of the feedback from the at least one client system; and

selecting a portion of the plurality of content pieces to be sent to the at least one client system in response to the aggregate representation of the feedback.

122. The method of claim 120, wherein communicating the rating feedback to the server comprises periodically communicating a batch of rating feedback.

123. The method of claim 120, wherein the rating feedback comprises a single rated content piece, and wherein communicating the rating feedback to the server comprises communicating the rating feedback in real-time.

124. The method of claim 120, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a continuous connection for communicating the rating feedback to the server.

125. The method of claim 120, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a connection initiated by the at least one client system for communicating the rating feedback to the server.

126. The method of claim 120, wherein the rating feedback includes user rating of the content pieces.

127. The method of claim 120, wherein the rating feedback includes automated rating of the content pieces.

128. The method of claim 120, wherein the rating feedback includes user rating of the content pieces and automated rating of the content pieces.

129. The method of claim 120, wherein the rating feedback is communicated from each at least one client system to the server independently.

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